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INFORMA

COUNTRY

USSR (Cancasas)

DATE DISTR. 4 October 1948

SUBJECT

Soviet Proops and Military Equipment in Georgia

NO. OF PAGES 2

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- 1. Strong military concentrations in the Georgian-Turkish border area were reported by escaped prisoners. They spoke of strong morter emplacements and of a large number of multiple rocket launchers (Stalinorgeln). The tycops are said to be equipped with new submachine pistols and signal populpment, most of it of German make. There were more 7-34 than Stalin Sanks.
- 2. The large tank repair shop in Tbilisi (Tiflis) repairs mainly T-34 tanks. As far as observed, to new tanks are being built in this plant, which cervices the entire area south of the Caucasus. The workers are "allegedly soleased" soldiers still wearing uniforms; they have been assembled into groups, but are expected to be set up into armored units in the near future. In addition, German specialists, mainly consisting of prisoners-of-war. are working in this plant. These men have no contact with ordinary German prisoners and come under the Soviet Army and not the MVD, as is usually the case. These men can be released only for reasons of grave sickness, and the Russians are trying to retain them.
- 3. In the furkish border area, many tanks are equipped with automatic guns, 80 mm rocket projectors MB with 36 rockets (Salvengeschuetze). The use of automatic guns seems to be on the increase, since an increasing number of tanks equipped with such guns has been seen leaving the repair shops of Toilisi during the last few months.
- 4. The troops in Tbilisi and Georgia use new trucks ZIS 150 (3.5 ton trucks with six-cylinder motors, 90 HP) and SID 253 trucks (3.5 ton trucks with 83 RP Diesel motors). Preference is given to truck model ZIS 150. In addition, Studebaker trucks are being used. Their popularity, however, as well as that of the Mack-Diesel, is decreasing because of the difficulty of obtaining spare parts.
- 5. All troops in Georgia are now equipped with submachine pistols and with ammunition belts resembling the ammunition belt of the Italian machine pistols. At the present time, only guard details are using submachine pistols with drum magazine. Guard details and other units in Georgia seem to use westly the German machine gun 42 for training purposes. The 762 mm gun, maiel 1910, is used only for camp patrol.

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- 6. Russian soldiers were ordered by their superiors to use their spare time for close combat training; such training groups have been observed for the last few months everywhere where troop units or guard units are stationed.
- 7. Submarine patrols are operating along the Black Sea coast in the direction of Turkey. Neither torpedo boats, destroyers, nor speed boats were observed. The coastal traffic seems negligible. The most important ship is the "Transylvania", which runs the route Constanta-Odessa (?)-Novorossisk-Batum.
- 8. Source observed that all railroad installations, including the smallest bridges and tunnels, are kept under military guard. Guard posts generally have guard shacks and telephones. The tunnel between Sochi and Sukhumi along the line Armavir-Sukhumi-Tbilisi is extremely narrow.
- 9. North of Tbilisi. at the foot of Mount Kazbek and near the Georgian military highway, there is a mystery tunnel which, reportedly, is to be used for neither a road nor a railroad. Prisoners-of-war who have worked there are bound to secrecy and appear to be afraid to discuss the subject. Generally, men who have only a slight chance of returning to Germany are assigned to this work.

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